

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
October 3, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Dennis King (Vice Chair). Ms. Susan Mackinnon (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos.

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent), Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent), and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business & Finance)

Call to Order

Ms. Newcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Opening Statement

“This meeting is being live-streamed by Chelmsford Telemedia and posted to the CPS website for interested community members to access and watch. In-person public participation will be taking place tonight in accordance with the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Guidelines. Anyone speaking tonight during the public input portion of this meeting has notified the superintendent’s office of their desire to speak and has been provided with these guidelines. Upon request written comments received no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of this meeting will also be read and made part of the record of the meeting during the second public comment session.”

The meeting commenced with Ms. Mackinnon reading the “Chelmsford Land Acknowledgement Proclamation” which has been adopted for the Town by the Select Board members to “acknowledge and recognize and celebrate the native people who lived here prior to settlers coming from everywhere else”.

Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of September 19, 2023**

Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 19, 2023. Ms. Santos seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Keya shared that there have been several colleges visiting CHS so far this year. The SATs are scheduled for October 7th. Picture retakes will be taken on November 9th. Late buses start running on October 17th. On October 24th Eighth Grade Parent night is scheduled. The recent curriculum night was a huge success with many families attending to meet their students’ teachers. Clubs were featured that evening. Flu vaccines for students will be on October 18th with information on this being sent out on ConnectEd. The Lions varsity golf team is currently in first place! Lana said that the girls’ varsity soccer team is really battling in a tough Merrimack Valley Conference. The CHS Ecology Club is continuing their composting initiative this year at all three lunches. The Ecology Club received a \$10,000 grant from New England Biolabs to support continuing the composting program. Congratulations to junior, Sophia Roy, who won third place in Informative Speaking at the 31st Annual Yale Invitational High School Tournament in New Haven this past weekend. The National Speech and Debate Association announced that CHS’s Speech and Debate Team has earned a spot in the Association’s 100 Club!

Good News

The following seven CHS seniors that have met the requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy: Grace Belleza for ASL; Kenny Bocanegra for Spanish; Ava Hagenah for ASL; Bryn Munson for ASL; Emily Nardino Correa for Spanish; Kristen Shea for ASL and Brinley Williamson for ASL.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Presentation: Chelmsford Water District (Todd Melanson & Stephen DeFrancesco)

Dr. Lang invited Mr. Melanson to speak tonight about an upcoming project that corresponds to some schools and utilization of some property. Tonight's agenda packet contains slides pertinent to the presentation. PFAS are in the water (and pretty much everything in our homes) and regulations became effective in 2020 on steps to take to mitigate this issue. His presentation is eye-opening and may be watched on Chelmsford Telemedia. Chelmsford violated the allowed amount of PFAS in the water in 2021 and has been working on engineering solutions since that time. All three of Chelmsford's water treatment facilities are involved. Massachusetts has revolving funds to help with the cost. To save costs and time the Chelmsford Water District is looking for an easement to allow pipes to be put on the boundaries of some schools. This work would take about 25 days and could be done during the summer to minimize disruption to school days. Surveys and borings would need to be done to finalize the exact route of the pipes under school property. The pipes will be ten inches in diameter. Dr. Lang interjected that The Committee does not have the authority to authorize easements on school properties, but The Town does. Dr. Lang suggests that The Committee show support for these plans.

Mr. King motioned to support the Chelmsford Water District's school properties route proposal as presented tonight. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

2. Academic Update: Spring 2023 MCAS Data and Accountability Rating

Dr. Hirsch presented in detail the update on MCAS testing from the spring and the details of accountability rating. Her accompanying slides are included in tonight's agenda packet and her entire comprehensive presentation may be viewed on Chelmsford Telemedia. In 2018 the accountability system was implemented so districts could determine their needs for assistance or intervention. This includes the traditional "normative percentile" (which shows how schools perform compared to other districts) as well as "criterion reference" (showing how we do when compared to districts similar to ours) which shows the progress of the school districts. The "criterion reference" requires data from two consecutive years. Due to COVID no data exists for 2020, 2021 or 2022. The percentile for all Chelmsford schools is above 50%. Dr. Hirsch's explanation for "criterion reference" would be best understood by watching her presentation! Most Chelmsford schools scored higher in 2019 than in 2022 and are now on the "recovery path" and endeavor to return to the levels of 2019 prior to COVID. Targets have been set for each school district and progress is being monitored toward these targets. Chelmsford is making "substantial progress" toward the given targets. **This means that no State assistance or intervention is required!**

3. 2023/24 SC Meeting Presentation Schedule: Schools and Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Dr. Lang included in tonight's agenda packet a presentation schedule for the School Committee meetings for the rest of this school year. This will include a meeting on November 14th for both middle schools to present and answer common questions about how the beginning of their years under the middle school realignment have started off. Dr. Lang added that if special projects are focusing on a specific department in any of the schools, these may be included in the meetings going forward. The schedule was positively received by The Committee.

4. MASC Resolutions & Voting Delegate – Fall 2023 Membership Meeting

The following resolutions will be considered at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) Members in November 2023.

1. Full, Stable Funding for METCO Resolution

The Committee supports this resolution: 5-0.

2. Regarding Investigations and Recommendations for Transportation Bidding Procedures

The Committee supports this resolution: 5-0.

3. Regional Transportation Resolution

The Committee supports this resolution: 5-0.

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Committee does not support this resolution: 0-5

5. MA School Building Authority Resolution

The Committee supports this resolution: 5-0.

6. School Bus Stop Arm Surveillance Act and Enforcement and Penalties

The Committee supports this resolution: 5-0.

7. Related to MCAS

The Committee does not support this resolution: 0-5

8. Safe Storage of Firearms

The Committee does not support this resolution: 1-3 and one abstention.

Mr. King motioned that Sue be the delegate to the MASC Convention and John be the alternate. Ms. Santos seconded it. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Approval of Field Trip & Travel Requests

Mr. King motioned to approve the McCarthy Middle School's 7th grade field trip to Manchester, New Hampshire on December 8, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Mackinnon attended the CHIPS PTO meeting last evening and marveled at all the good work they do for fundraisers and enrichments. They will be participating in "Square One Art" with Lion's Pride.

Ms. Santos shared that she met with the CHS PTO where they reaffirmed their board members for the school year. A "Social Media Coordinator" position has been added to the board. They discussed staff enrichment plans. They are looking for a fund raiser for the "After Prom Breakfast". Last year they had the most participants ever! Center School had a large turnout for their PTO meeting and had some attending by "Zoom". Fund raisers are shopping for "Spirit Wear" and picture day. They will be having two seatings for their Ice Cream Social on October 5th because of the large numbers expected. Trunk or Treat is October 21st and recycle day will be November 4th at McCarthy Middle School. They will be hosting monthly staff appreciation events! They will be creating a directory for their school for families to opt in.

The Chelmsford Alumni Association will meet tomorrow night shared by Mr. King. He would also like to see the updated liaison assignments updated on the web site.

Ms. Newcomb attended South Row's PTO last night with a large turnout. They held a successful Ice Cream Social. The Pumpkin Fair will be held on Saturday, October 14th. The Spirit Wear fund raiser will close on October 18th. They are planning a new fund raiser for gift cards.

Action/ New Items

Ms. Newcomb would like an update on when the web director's position will be filled. Dr. Lang said interviews are currently taking place for this position. A working session for The Committee will be held on October 17th at 5:00 p.m.

Public Comments

none

Adjournment (7:52 p.m.)

Mr. King motioned to adjourn. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

***Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary***